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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0689
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1392
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASTANA 000412

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [KNNP](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: SENATE CHAIRMAN TOKAYEV PROMISES EXPEDITIOUS
ACTION ON CTR AGREEMENT

REF: ASTANA 0345

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Senate Chairman Tokayev promised the Ambassador on March 5 that the Senate would take swift action to pass the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) agreement as soon as it receives the legislation from the Majilis. He also promised that Kazakhstan would take into account the concerns of the United States, OSCE, and Kazakhstan's civil society regarding draft Internet legislation.
END SUMMARY.

¶3. (SBU) During a March 5 meeting with Senator Chairman Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev, the Ambassador pressed for expeditious ratification of the Cooperation Threat Reduction (CTR) agreement and new Anti-Money Laundering/Counter-Terrorism Finance (AML/CTF) legislation. He also raised concerns about a draft Internet law currently under consideration in the Majilis (the lower house of parliament).

¶4. (SBU) The Ambassador told Tokayev that the Majilis passed the CTR Agreement out of committee on March 3, and the U.S. government just approved changes in the Kazakh-language text that the Majilis had requested. He stressed the urgency of the agreement's swift ratification, explaining that some of our CTR programs, notably our biological programs, are stalled because, in the interim, Customs will not permit us to import technical assistance tax-free. Tokayev promised the Senate would act quickly on the agreement once the Majilis passes it. He said he would personally oversee the agreement's movement through the Senate, and assured the Ambassador that the Senate would not return it to the Majilis for any modifications.

¶5. (SBU) The Ambassador noted that AML/CTF legislation had passed through a first reading in the Majilis on March 4. Adoption of the legislation will be an important step forward for Kazakhstan in countering money-laundering and terrorism finance, he explained. We hope it will move forward quickly through the legislative process. Tokayev did not appear to be aware of the details of the legislation, but thanked the Ambassador for explaining the U.S. position, and promised to take our views into account.

¶16. (SBU) The Ambassador explained to Tokayev that the current version of the draft Internet law has raised a number of concerns (see reftel for details). In the run up to the country's 2010 OSCE chairmanship, Kazakhstan should consider carefully whether it is necessary to pass any new legislation in this area. Tokayev responded that the government sent the legislation to the Majilis, but the Senate has not officially received a copy. He explained, "Frankly, I'm not certain why the government is pushing for this legislation. I don't understand all the technical details, but I don't see how you can control the Internet." The Ambassador noted that China has tried to control Internet access, but have not managed to be very effective. Tokayev said he had read the letter OSCE Freedom of the Media Representative Miklos Haraszti recently sent to him and Majilis Speaker Ural Mukhamedzhanov expressing OSCE's concerns about the Internet law. Tokayev promised that Kazakhstan would be careful about the legislation, saying "We will take into account U.S. and OSCE concerns, as well as those of civil society and the public as a whole. I'll pass your views to the government and Majilis. Let's continue to talk about this. We still have time."

¶17. (SBU) The Ambassador previewed that he would soon deliver a public speech about democracy to a Kazakhstani audience. Tokayev said that democracy is no longer a contentious issue in the bilateral relationship. "It used to be a painful question for us, but now we can talk about it freely with you," he maintained. He explained that he had read Secretary Clinton's remarks in Beijing, and described them as a "positive step." "Soft power plays an important role," Tokayev continued, "and the whole world still believes in the United States as a beacon of democracy and justice."

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